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NATURE STUDY FOR NURSES

By ANNE E. PERKINS, M.D.

SOME hospitals are obliged to make the rule that the nurses off duty must go out of doors, instead of "going to bed because they feel so tired." In London, one sees hosts of them in cloaks and bonnets riding on the buses. In cities, the open trolley is a favorite method of obtaining air without exercise or fatigue. Many nurses say "It was my day off, but I was so tired I thought I wouldn't go out." If they do go out, they feel better for the change and the open air; in-doors they are likely to sit about and talk shop or eat indigestible lunches. A good rule is to leave one's work or patient behind and not refer to them while off duty. If we are to be all-around citizens, we must have other interests and not get into a rut. Everyone should have a fad—an avocation as well as a vocation.

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours."

Sometimes in the rush of engrossing duties it scarcely seems as if we are *living* at all, but just making a living. One of the best ways to escape from work and from one's self, worries, and moods, is to cultivate an interest in out-of-doors and study at least one branch of nature, whether it be birds, insects, flowers, ferns, or whatever one fancies most or has at hand. It is not necessary to set about it strenuously, but to read and observe for one's self in order to enjoy nature intelligently. It is surprising how much one can enjoy and see in a limited time; in a city, there is always a trolley that goes where there are birds and flowers; in a small city, a bicycle helps to reach the country quickly. Often a nurse is with a child or comfortable invalid all summer, at the shore, in the mountains, or country somewhere. Her interest and even a little knowledge will be eagerly shared and will help pass tedious days.

Nothing more quickly dissipates morbidness and brings escape from self, into serenity and peace, when we are worn and anxious. Start for the woods when you want to get away from yourself. It opens up a new world of beauty and unconsciously the tension is relieved, our spirit is healed by the bird voices and restful green. Some say "I do not know any bird but a robin and a crow," and assert that

they enjoy nature better not to learn long names. But certainly, knowledge of bird or flower or fern does not detract from its æsthetic enjoyment—rather, increases it—for we appreciate all the more the wonder and beauty if we know something about the marvellous structure, ways, and habits, and adaptation for its life-struggle. One who knows little of birds, misses the whole world of warblers. We see what we look for. Bryant's "Invitation to the Country" says:

"The bluebird chants, from the elm's long branches,
A hymn to welcome the budding year.
The south wind wanders from field to forest,
And softly whispers, 'The spring is here.'

"No lays so joyous as these are warbled
From wiry prison in maiden's bower;
No pampered bloom of the green-house chamber
Has half the charm of the lawn's first flower.

"Yet these sweet sounds of the early season,
And these fair sights of its sunny days,
Are only sweet when we fondly listen,
And only fair when we fondly gaze."

It is like Wordsworth's daffodils; when we have seen lovely vistas of ferns, hedges of wild crab-apples in bloom, dogwood, or some beautiful bird, we can visualize them later:

"For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills
And dances with the daffodils."

The day is a memorable one when the first scarlet tanager is seen; and early in August, when he seldom sings, one may see him changing to the green of winter. By the law of compensation, if we go out to see or hear one thing and miss it, we are rewarded by something as good or better.

In hunting for a chestnut-sided warbler's nest, I found an indigo bird's nest with its pearly blue-white eggs. In waiting for a rose-breasted goosbeak, I saw a chewink building her nest and watched it day by day till it contained four speckled eggs. I could not find the veery's nest, but I came upon such exquisite orchids that I was reconciled. And so it goes—one never knows what new bird will be seen or heard. "Secrets lurk on all sides. There is news in every bush." Nothing is

more fascinating than bird study. But flowers, ferns, mosses, mushrooms, and insects are all full of engrossing interest. We are accustomed to think that spring and summer are the only bird months, but Chapman says winter is the best time to study birds, as they are at their minimum and easily identified.

In June and July, during the nesting season, the camera is especially in demand. In August, the goldfinches are nesting and the warblers returning from the North. In November, there is still a surprising variety of birds and the witch-hazel is in bloom. There are cocoons to gather, easily seen when leaves have fallen, and interesting to watch, in March and April, as lovely moths and butterflies. Then, too, there are so many birds' nests that we can identify, numerous red berries, bitter sweet, dogwood, false holly, etc.

In winter are snow buntings, juncos, goldfinches in winter costume, chickadees and nut-hatches. Winter feeding places, posts, with boards nailed on top, or suet tied on a tree,—bring chickadees, nut-hatches, winter chippies, and others, delightfully tamed; and this is sure to lead to care that the cats do not catch them, and that in turn to joining the Audubon Society and persuading patients to do the same.

In the woods after a light snowstorm are dainty tracks of partridges with their snow shoes, squirrels, chipmunks, foxes, rabbits, etc., and these are entertaining to trace.

Some books that are helpful to nurses and patients are: Chapman's "Bird Life," Chapman's "Handbook of Birds of Eastern North America," Blanchan's "Bird-Neighbors," Dugmore's "Bird Homes," Chapman's "Warblers of North America," Herbert K. Job's "How to Study Birds," Mrs. Dana's "How to Know the Wild Flowers," Mrs. Dana's "How to Know the Ferns," Atkinson's "Mushrooms, Edible and Poisonous," A. J. Grout's "Mosses With a Hand Lens," Keeler's "Our Native Trees," Comstock's "Insect Life," Kellogg's "American Insects," Holland's "Moth and Butterfly Books," Arnold's "Sea Beach at Ebb Tide," Peterson's "How to Know Wild Fruits," Blanchan's "Nature's Garden," Egging's "Fresh Water Aquarium and Its Inhabitants."

John Burroughs and Bradford Torrey have many delightful books for reading to a patient as well as to one's self. Winthrop Packard, F. Schuyler Mathews, Wm. Hamilton Gibson all write charmingly of common wayside things. Burroughs has compiled in "Songs of Nature" the best nature poems. Richard Jefferies' "A Sublimated Burroughs" is too little known to most readers, his exquisite "Hours of Spring" and

"Wild Flowers," the "Pageant of Summer," and "Selections" can be had in little vest pocket editions from Mosher. One might prolong the list indefinitely.

Appleton & Co. publish a magazine, *Bird-Lore*, for the Audubon Societies, and Cornell University issues free a Home Nature Study course of illustrated leaflets that are very helpful.

MORAL PROPHYLAXIS

By GEORGE P. DALE, M.D.

Dayton, O.

(Continued from page 694)

GONORRHOEA

GONORRHOEA is acknowledged to be the most prevalent of all diseases. Doctors who specialize in venereal diseases are apt to say that 90 per cent. of adult males have had it, but, without taking as cynical a view as this, we must grant that it is shockingly common, particularly among men, and the highest social ranks present as great a proportion of cases as do the lowest. Throughout this country at least 50 per cent. of the men between 20 and 40 have had this disease. Recent figures say that there are about 14,000,000 male adults in the United States under the age of 30 years, and the most reliable observers calculate that 8,000,000 of them have gonorrhœa or its sequelæ. Of 1000 married men in New York, 800 have gonorrhœa and in 99 per cent. of all these cases the disease has remained uncured and can infect their wives. Gonorrhœa is a disease of the virtuous wives of our great cities as well as of the prostitutes, but it is observed that it abounds with greater frequency in women of the lower classes, where moral safeguards fail to a greater degree, than in women of higher grades in society. In New York, of five married women, at least three have gonorrhœa. It may be a startling statement, but I believe nevertheless true, that there is in the aggregate more venereal infection among married women than among professional prostitutes in this country. If we say that 5 per cent. of men infect the women they marry, and if we take the census of 1900, giving the number of married women in this country as 16,000,000, then 5 per cent. would represent 800,000 infected with gonorrhœa alone.

Mortuary lists rarely, if ever, include the name gonorrhœa, but indirectly it probably causes more deaths than does acquired syphilis,